

# Woman Suffrage Arrives in Arlington

Arlington Advocate Articles  
& Editorials 1915 - 1920

Illustrated by pro and anti suffrage  
cartoons

Pro suffrage cartoons by Blanche Ames\*  
Anti suffrage cartoons from the Internet

\*Editor Oakes Ames Plimpton's grandmother

# THE NEXT RUNG



**1920 - 75th Anniversary of Woman Suffrage - 1995**

Drawn by Blanche Ames (1878-1969). Published in the Boston Transcript, Nov., 1915, and the pamphlet *Blanche Ames and Woman Suffrage* by James Kenneally (1993). Original at the Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts.

## INTRODUCTION

My interest in woman suffrage came about from all of us coming across my grandmother's woman suffrage cartoons in going through her estate after her passing in 1969. My grandparents' estate was called "Borderland" and is now a State Park (North Easton). I became involved in starting up *Friends of Borderland* to provide interpretation, and cultural and recreational activities. One year we had Professor James Kenneally of Stonehill College come to lecture on woman suffrage in North Easton, and he further researched the topic to write a pamphlet entitled *Blanche Ames and Woman Suffrage*\* featuring my grandmother's cartoons. As most of the greater Ames family (*Ames Shovel*) was anti, there was quite a family drama with several of my grandfather's cousins leading anti-suffrage organizations. As Professor Kenneally noted, they proved the converse of their philosophy that women were not fit for politics. True also here in Arlington! Putting together an exhibit of my grandmother's art at the Town Hall Gallery in November, 2012, I thought to research woman suffrage in Arlington, hence this pamphlet.

It is a surprise to find out that some of the key women of our Town were 'antis', such as Mesdames Whittemore and Brackett and Miss Ida Robbins. Considering that, and the general opposition of the Catholic Church, it is not surprising that both the Town and the State voted two to one against granting suffrage. The suffrage amendment to the constitution was passed by the State Legislatures (not by the popular vote).

In the 1920 elections (the first with woman suffrage) it is also a surprise to find out our Town was five to one Republican, though remember the Republican party was more progressive back then. Theodore Roosevelt was a 'trust buster' reformer and promoter of national parks and wildlife preserves. Then the Democratic Party was more tied to the segregationist South — note that FDR was the Democratic vice-presidential candidate!

*Oakes Plimpton, Editor*

\* That pamphlet along with my grandmother's cartoons printed as posters, is available from the Editor. Write me if interested in either, or the books listed below — 67 Coolidge Road, Arlington, MA 02476; <[opoakes@gmail.com](mailto:opoakes@gmail.com)>.

*Stories of Early 20th Century Life, an Arlington Oral History*  
*Robbins Farm Park — Local History from the Revolutionary War to the Present*  
*1975 1st Parish Church Fire; 1981 Modern Design—Process / Dissent / Support*  
*Orchids at Christmas — Poems & Orchid Drawings by Blanche Ames Ames sent out as Holiday*  
*Cards 1937-1949; also tributes & botanical essay by Oakes Ames.*

# ANTI-SUFFRAGE CARTOONS



Captions (above right)  
What, dinner not ready yet!  
What have you been doing?  
Missing word below: OVEN!



INCIDENT OF WOMAN SUFFRAGE.  
WHILE IN THE BOOTH SHE REMEMBERED SHE HAD LEFT A CAKE IN THE (

## Anti-Suffragist Rose Tea

The Arlington Anti-Suffrage League gave a Rose Tea, from three to five, in Odd Fellow Hall, on Wednesday, Sept. 20, which was a great success and made an effective opening of the league's campaign against the Suffrage cause. Seven tables were placed in the ballroom, each decorated with baskets filled with artificial red roses and asparagus vine. These roses were for sale, and nearly all who attended went away with a rose, which is the emblem of the Anti-Suffrage cause. Tea urns were on each table, and these were presided over by Mesdames A.M. Walcott, H.B. Pierce, Charles W. Allen, Louis B. Carr, O.W. Whittemore, J.Q.A. Brackett, Miss Ida Robbins. A group of younger ladies assisted in the serving of delicious refreshments.

Mrs. B.A. Norton, chairman of the League, spoke informally as to what the Massachusetts League is doing, and called the attention of the large audience to the banner, which had been used at the different conventions, and which was the work of Mrs. Almira Whittemore of Arlington, who is one of the oldest members of the Association.

The song "The Anti-Suffrage Rose" written for the campaign, was sung by Miss Grace Parker as a solo, with a group of ladies assisting in the chorus. These were Mesdames John Dick, W.K. Cook, Dean S. Renolds, and Miss Mabel Davis.



Blanche and Oakes Ames sawing wood circa 1905

The Tipperary song, which has been used by the Anti-Suffragists all through the campaign with special words, was also sung by this group, and aroused a good deal of enthusiasm. Mrs. Grace Munroe Marshall was the accompanist.

During the tea, Mrs. Charles Chapin of Cambridge gave an earnest and inspiring talk on what was being accomplished for the cause by the personal effort of the lay woman. Tiny roses were then distributed to every one present. The committee for the refreshments was Miss Nellie Ewart (chairman), Mesdames Arthur Wood, Winfield H. Butler, David Buttrick, Lawrence Peirce, and T.J. Robinson.





Woman Suffrage Flowers.



Uncle Sam: "Prune away Prejudice, and these will blossom in November."

**1920 -- 75th Anniversary of Woman Suffrage -- 1995**

Drawn by Blanche Ames (1878-1969). Published in *Woman's Journal*, May, 1915.  
Suffrage came to the West first as a number of voters was required to enter the Union.  
Original at Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, Mass.

Equal Suffrage

## Open-Air Meetings

Arlington Advocate 10/2/15

The Arlington Equal Suffrage League held open-air rallies on Friday evening, Sept. 24, with Margaret Foley as speaker. Miss Foley gave a brief history of the changes made before men were granted the right to vote. At first this privilege was granted to only those of certain religious views, which was changed to those who were taxpayers.

Later the working man wanted the vote. This raised a storm of protest but justice won, and the "white male" was allowed this privilege. This, in turn, was changed to "male," when suffrage was extended to the colored men.

Miss Foley felt, after a struggle like this for justice, that the men of Massachusetts on Nov. 2d, would see that further justice be done, and that this privilege be extended to women, so that this State would typify a true democracy. That men should have the same faith in their wives, their daughters and their sisters that they now repose in the foreigners within our boundaries. That the women of Massachusetts would vote as intelligently as they now do in states where equal suffrage has been operative for years. That in

those states it was proved beyond doubt that women do not aspire for office.

Woman's fundamental duties are those of reproduction and conservation. That because of 20th century changes in the home, she needed the 20th century tool—the vote—to properly perform her task.

In the olden days the home and its industries were within its four walls and the boundaries of its fences, but today, the home and its interests are one with the town, the county and the state.

Miss Foley said if she had \$10,000 to invest, she would ask the advice of a man, but if she had only \$2.00 which must cover many needs, she would ask the advice of a woman, showing that each sex has its value in matters financial.

Having spent much time in the tenement district, Miss Foley said there was nothing to fear from the so-called "ignorant vote" of its women. That they were temperate and more law-abiding than its men, and were tense in the struggle to keep body and soul together. That according to statistics, only five percent of inmates of prisons are women, and yet we hear little talk about the vote of those 95 percent "bad men."

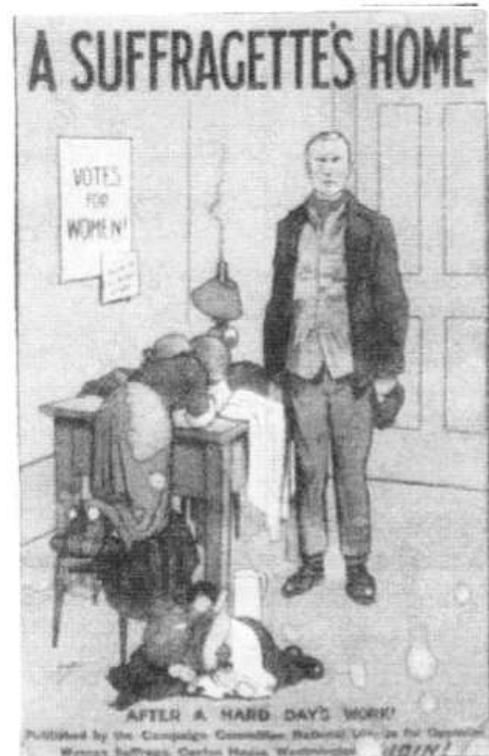
## ANTI-SUFFRAGE CARTOONS



Captions above left: "GIRLS I DIDN'T MARRY"

Below: "AFTER A HARD DAY'S WORK!"

Below left: "My wife's joined the Suffrage Movement.  
(I've suffered ever since!)"



## Arlington Advocate Anti-Suffrage

### A Republic vs a Democracy

To say that within the past few months this office has received almost an avalanche of matter pertaining to the suffrage question, is to speak well within bounds. If there remains any new statement of alleged fact or any fresh argument pro and con, it is because persistence has failed to discover anything new, the fertile brain discovering fresh ways of stating old claims.

It is interesting, possibly illuminating, that in all the matter referred to, there is no longer any clamor for "Woman's Rights" that was the slogan when the question of equal suffrage was introduced into American politics, when the three links—Abolition, Prohibition, Woman's Rights bound together able, brainy, progressive people pledged to work together to change existing social, moral and political conditions. In the intervening years progress has been made. Slavery has been abolished, but not by the means advocated by the Abolitionist. Temperance has been advanced, but through the channels of local opinion that reflects the moral sentiment of the community interested and not in the last by the drastic force of prohibition as a political issue. This disposes of the two. What of the third?

Editorial 10/16/15

When "Woman Rights" leaders realized that no sane person denied that any right exercised by man was equally the right of woman, the point of attack was changed and the call for the ballot has been more properly made under the demand for equal suffrage. But does not this change bring the best possible proof that exercise of the elective franchise has always been a matter of expediency and not a question of right? This is a rule that always has and must always govern, and applies with special force to the question of the franchise.

For instance, is it expedient that a small minority of women be allowed to force the duties and obligations of citizenship upon the great majority, in brain power, in efficiency, and ability to grasp large affairs, the equals at least of those who desire to broaden their fields of activity?

Is it expedient to more than double the present voting list with hardly a possibility of improvement in quality? The average man is the equal morally, spiritually, and as a reacher after high ideals, of the average woman. Sentimentally and emotionally woman's standards may be higher, but solidly, on the hundred cents to the dollar, or "by their fruits" man measure to offset in things that count. The percentage of those who live on lower moral levels is not likely to vary greatly with either sex.

Now the census reveals the fact that in all the populous states the proportion of women to men stands at two to one. This being so, it requires no argument to prove that broadening the franchise results in bringing in a flood to swell the undesirable list.

The thing in all this matter which from the start has troubled the well-wishers and unselfish big men concerned for the welfare of the nation, is that women have brought into the discussion glaring proof that indirection is her chief weapon, proving her standard of honor is not the man's standard; that what man knows as fair play is outside her conceiving of practicing. A recent announcement of a marriage engagement might be said to illustrate this point.

The big men we have referred to oppose universal suffrage on the same grounds that they are opposed to referendum and recall —

because it is drifting towards a democracy on which the World's great republics that have preceded this one of ours have smashed and gone into oblivion — because this country is a Republic, the broad foundation of which is a representative form of government, and it will be led to the brink of the precipice when the calm and careful debate of the legislative hall is turned over to the unthinking action of the mass, sure to be led or controlled by the designing demagogue, whose methods have been so glaringly brought to the front in recent events.

*Note:* The Advocate changed its tune when women voted for the first time in November of 1920 — “Nothing could be more satisfactory than the entire proceeding from start to finish.”

# WOMAN SUFFRAGE AMENDMENT DEFEATED 11/2/15

Arlington Advocate Article

## Tuesday's Election

The election on Tuesday last brought to the polls the phenomenal vote that not more often than once in a generation forces the total, on purely state issues, above the vote at a presidential election. It is not quite true that the issues were wholly local, for the results of the tariff enacted by the minority now in control in national affairs, could not fail of having its effect. . . . The ballot contained three amendments to the State Constitution to be accepted or rejected by the people. The vote in Arlington on the tax amendment was yes 1537, no 407. On the homestead amendment was yes 1537, no 558. This favorable vote was reversed on the suffrage question, yes vote being 857, the no vote 1410.

During the day a committee of the Equal Suffrage League took turns in holding a banner soliciting Yes votes within the distance prescribed by law from the polling place and each detail was greeted pleasantly by voters passing, not a few halting for an exchange of pleasantries with enthusiasts so faithful to a cause. This was the only varia-

tion from the quiet that has obtained on election day since the introduction of the Australian ballot. The woman suffrage amendments to the state constitution were presented for rejection or acceptance by the legal voters of New York and Pennsylvania on Tuesday as well as to the voters of the Old Bay State. Without doubt the active campaigning both for and against acceptance awakened an interest that was a strong factor in bringing out an unusually large vote in all three states.

The defeat of the amendment was certainly emphatic, ranging from 132,000 in this state to 250,000 in N.Y., and demonstrates one thing at least, that the majority of those having the elective franchise do not believe it wise to increase it by including women. It was also a concession to the vast majority of women, one it would be hard to overstate, who in the past few months have made it plain they do not desire to have what is spoken of as "the duties of citizenship" thrust upon them — something worth recognition and respect.

## Woman Suffrage Amendment

C. S. Parker, Editor & Owner

**DOUBLE THE POWER OF THE HOME -- TWO  
GOOD VOTES ARE BETTER THAN ONE**



*Blanche Ames, 1915*

**1920 - 75th Anniversary of Woman Suffrage - 1995**

Drawn by Blanche Ames (1878-1969). Published in the Boston Transcript Sept., 1915 and the pamphlet *Blanche Ames and Woman Suffrage* by James Kenneally (1993). Original at the Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts.

the Constitution—  
passed by the House of Representatives May 21, 1920,  
by the Senate June 4, 1920, and  
ratified by the 36th State Legislature (necessary 3/4ths of the States) Aug. 18, 1920.

THE FIRST VOTE IN ARLINGTON  
OCCURRED OCTOBER 10, 1920 Ar-  
lington Advocate Article 10/10/20

### Primary Vote

On Tuesday, the polls in Arlington were opened at noon, closing at nine in the evening, during which time 1377 votes were cast. By the courtesy of others present at the opening of the polls, Mrs. S. Elizabeth Yerrington, 92 years old, was given the privilege of depositing the first ballot.

but later and during the evening, this difference was reversed, the totals being 882 cast by men, 492 deposited by the women. As one who has noted with care the result of every election through a long series of years, we have only words of praise for the way Arlington women for the first time exercised this important duty of citizenship.\*

When the Australian ballot was first introduced, men voters showed vastly less intelligence in its use than did the women in this first venture into a new field on Tuesday.

\* Underlining by Editor. Perhaps the practice session described next page occurred before the primary vote, but the Advocate article about it was dated October 29.

9.

## Women Prepare to Vote

Just after lunch our friend Bushrod E. Hopkin, also 92, cast his vote. During the afternoon women voters outnumbered the men by the ratio of more than two to one,

# ... THE NEW CRADLE ...

Drawn by Mrs. Oakes Ames



VOTE—WE WILL MAKE IT BIG ENOUGH FOR BOTH BOY AND GIRL.

**1920 -- 75th Anniversary of Woman Suffrage -- 1995**

Drawn by Blanche Ames (1878-1969) in 1915. Copied from microfilm of Ames scrapbook, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

half filled with women on Wednesday afternoon, called together by the Arlington Woman's Republican town Committee for the purpose of instructing the women of Arlington how to mark their ballot so that it should be counted in the national election which comes next Tuesday.

The meeting was presided over by Mrs. Herbert W. Read, chairman of the Woman's committee who graciously introduced Mrs. Willard O. Brown of Medford. Mrs. Brown has appeared before thousands of women for this purpose, and with the aid of a group of Arlington women gave the demonstration from the times the declared opened by the constable until their close.

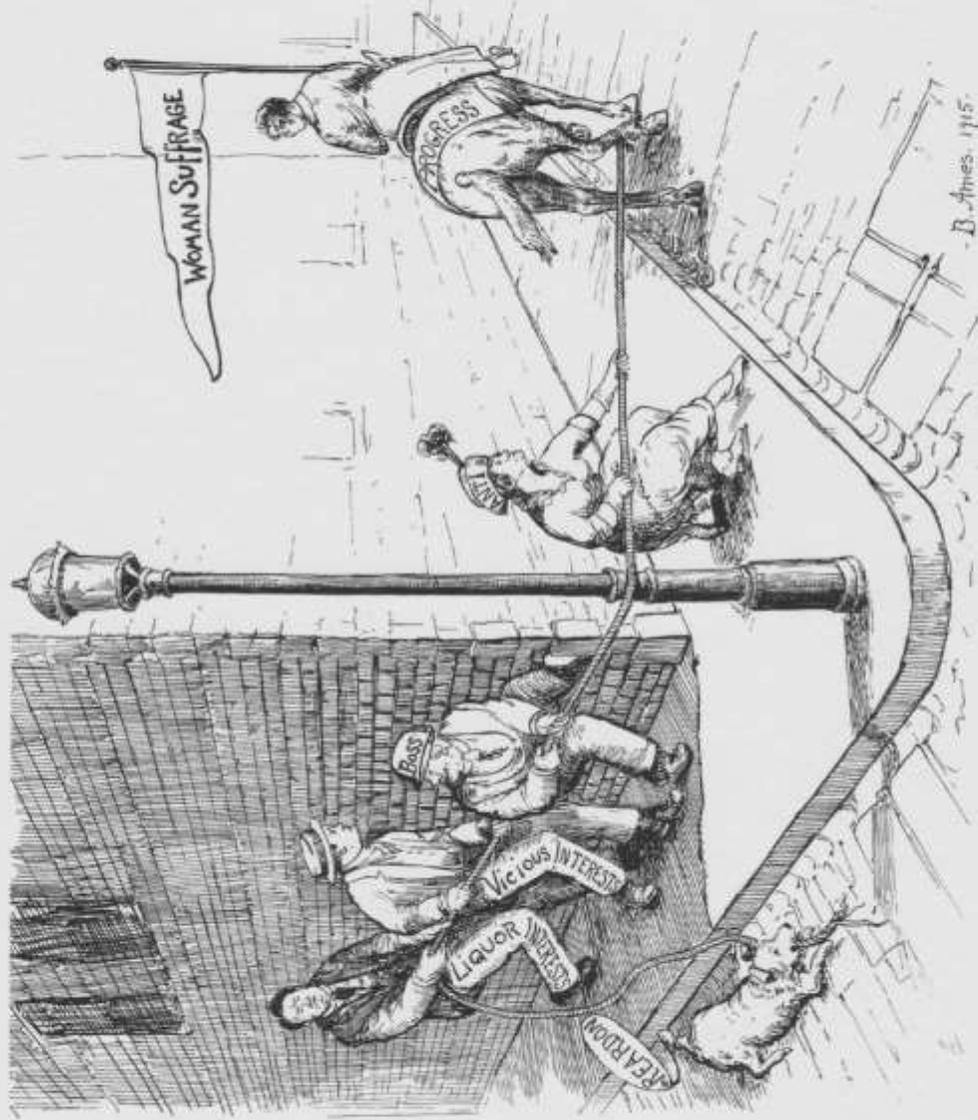
Previous to this, however, Mrs. Brown gave a brief talk explaining why women must have a part in politics; why they should all affiliate themselves with some one of the parties. How they could decide that question was by studying the history of each party.

Finally she considered two of the important issues of the present campaign which are the tariff and the League of Nations. In referring to article ten in the League of Nations, Mrs. Brown asked her audience if the mothers wanted their boys to be at the beck and call of every other nation in the settling of their disputes, which would be the case if we passed the League of Nations as it now stands.

The ballot was then explained, and some conflicting names of candidates given. All that one has to do is to look for the party she wants to vote for. If this is followed no mistake can be made. The stage has been set to represent a voting precinct, and Mrs. Brown, assisted by a group of women, gave a little farce as to the manner of voting and demonstrated some of the snags the election officers come up against at elections. It was cleverly given and instructive as well as amusing.

Those taking parts were Mrs. Herbert Boynton as the policeman, Mrs. Bert S. Currier, Mrs. George Tewksbury, Mrs. Allen Limball, Miss Eleanor Bussell, Mrs. Howard Turner, Mrs. Paul White, Miss Vida Damon Vale, Mrs. Trafford Hicks, Mrs. George Clark, Miss Elsie M. Parker.

## Anti-Allies and the Dog



**1920 - - 75th Anniversary of Woman Suffrage -- 1995**  
Drawn by Blanche Ames (1878-1969). Published in the *Woman's Journal*, October, 1915.  
Mr. Reardon was a State Representative and Treasurer of the Anti-Suffrage League, who signed an invitation to an anti-suffrage picnic listing the Mass. Liquor League as a supporter.



*Blanche & Oakes Ames sawing wood circa 1905*

## BACKGROUND

### The Equal Rights Convention of 1840

The assemblage was shocked when the female delegates from Massachusetts and Pennsylvania arrived at the Worlds Anti-Slave Convention in London in 1840. The Americans had violated the norms of acceptable behavior by including in their delegation eight women who had the audacity to have addressed promiscuous gatherings, that is audiences of both sexes.

After lengthy debate in which female presence was defended by male members of the American delegation, the convention refused to allow these interlopers to participate. The women were relegated to a balcony, there to sit silently behind a curtain. In what was to become a common occurrence in the women's rights movement, courageous men—in this case only two in number—joined the women.

Two of these outcasts, Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, smarting under this rebuke, resolved that someday they would call a convention dealing with women's rights.

Eight years later these pioneers of the feminist movement appealed to males and females who were concerned with justice for women to convene at Seneca Falls, New York. However, even the daring females who

answered this challenge were so conditioned by the notion of proper and natural spheres for men and women, they were reluctant to chair the meeting. Instead, they chose Mott's husband as presiding officer.

The delegates then approved a declaration of independence from male dominance and a series of resolutions calling for, among other reforms, equal justice and the right to make contracts and enjoy educational and employment opportunities on a par with men.

The only resolution not unanimously approved was one proclaiming it is "the duty of the women of the country to secure to themselves their sacred right to the elective franchise."

To many Americans of both sexes this proposal was revolutionary, for it was a direct challenge to the male monopoly of the political sphere, and if enacted, meant that women would enter political life promoting agendas of their own. No longer would they be demure creatures characterized by piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity, individuals whose interests were protected by their "better halves." . . .

Reprint of p. 1 of *Blanche Ames and Woman Suffrage* by James J. Kenneally